

CLAIMS

[9000] We claim:

1: A method of point-of-sale activation and subsequent registration of products, said method comprising the steps of:

- (a) providing a package by which a product, being unactivated prior to sale, is sold at a point-of-sale, said product having an activation code and said package having a PIN;
- (b) providing computer data storage apparatus within which said activation code is associated with said PIN;
- (c) transmitting said activation code over a first communications channel from said point-of-sale to said computer data storage apparatus; then,
- (d) having said computer data storage apparatus record that said PIN has been activated and may be used to register said product; then,
- (e) registering said product by transmitting said PIN over a second communications channel to said computer data storage apparatus.

2: The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

- (a) providing a kiosk at said point-of-sale for vending said package, said kiosk being in communication with said computer data storage apparatus over said first communications channel, said kiosk including a PIN applicator for applying said PIN to said package; then,
 - (b) applying said PIN to said package by said PIN applicator; then,
 - (c) vending said package at said point-of-sale by said kiosk;
- said package having said PIN subsequent to vending of said package by said kiosk but not having said PIN prior to application of said PIN to said package by said PIN applicator.

1 3: The method as recited in claim 2, in which said PIN applicator is a printer.

1 4: The method as recited in claim 2, in which said PIN applicator applies a label to
2 said package, said label having said PIN thereon.

1 5: The method as recited in claim 1, in which said step of registering said product
2 further includes, after said transmitting of said PIN over said second communications
3 channel, the step of receiving an unlocking code for said product over said second
4 communications channel from said computer data storage apparatus.

1 6: The method as recited in claim 1, in which said package includes a URL via which
2 said computer data storage apparatus may be contacted over said second communications
3 channel, and said method further comprises the steps of:

4 (a) providing a computer being interfaced to said second communications channel;
5 and

6 (b) providing a communications program on said computer;
7 and said step of registering said product further includes, prior to said transmitting of said
8 PIN over said second communications channel, the steps of:

9 (c) providing said URL to said communications program; and

10 (d) establishing a data connection to said computer data storage apparatus over said
11 second communications channel via said URL.

1 7: The method as recited in claim 1, in which said computer data storage apparatus is
2 interfaced to said second communications channel via audio recognition means, and said step
3 of registering said product further comprises, prior to said transmitting of said PIN over said
4 second communications channel, the steps of:

5 (a) providing a telephone; and

6 (b) establishing a telephonic connection between said telephone and said audio
7 recognition means over said second communications channel;

8 and said step of transmitting of said PIN over said second communications channel is via said
9 telephone to said audio recognition means.

1 8: The method as recited in claim 7, in which said telephone includes audio tone
2 generation means for generating audio tones and said audio recognition means is a telephonic
3 dialing tones recognizer, and said step of transmitting of said PIN over said second
4 communications channel includes the steps of:

5 (a) causing said audio tone generation means to generate a sequence of telephonic
6 dialing tones representing said PIN; and

7 (b) recognition of said sequence of telephonic dialing tones by said telephonic
8 dialing tones recognizer.

1 9: The method as recited in claim 7, in which audio recognition means is an IVR, and
2 said step of transmitting of said PIN over said second communications channel includes the
3 steps of:

4 (a) causing said PIN to be spoken into said telephone; and

5 (b) recognition of said spoken PIN by said IVR.

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1 10: The method as recited in claim 1, in which said package includes said activation
2 code and said activation code is machine-readable, and said method further includes the steps
3 of:

- 4 (a) providing an activation code reading apparatus at said point-of-sale; and,
5 (b) prior to transmitting said activation code over said first communications
6 channel, reading said activation code using said activation code reading
7 apparatus when said product is sold at said point-of-sale.

1 11: The method as recited in claim 10, in which said package includes a magnetic
2 strip onto which said activation code is encoded, and said activation code reading apparatus
3 is a magnetic strip reader.

1 12: The method as recited in claim 10, in which said activation code is optically
2 readable, and said activation code reading apparatus is an optical scanner.

1 13: The method as recited in claim 10, in which said package includes an ICC
2 element into which said activation code is encoded, and said activation code reading
3 apparatus is an ICC interface apparatus.

1 14: The method as recited in claim 10, in which said package obscures said PIN from
2 viewing by a human prior to presentation of said product at said point-of-sale.

1 15: The method as recited in claim 14, in which said package includes a removable
2 opaque covering and said PIN is obscured by said removable opaque covering.

1 16: The method as recited in claim 15, in which said activation code is on a top
2 surface of said removable opaque covering.

1 17: The method as recited in claim 15, in which said removable opaque covering is a
2 scratch-off opaque covering.

1 18: The method as recited in claim 17, in which said activation code is on a top
2 surface of said removable opaque covering.

1 19: The method as recited in claim 15, in which said removable opaque covering is a
2 peel-off opaque covering.

1 20: The method as recited in claim 19, in which said activation code is on a top
2 surface of said removable opaque covering.

1 21: The method as recited in claim 10, in which said step of registering said product
2 includes the steps of:

3 (a) providing an PIN-reading apparatus; and

4 (b) reading said PIN using said PIN-reading apparatus prior to said transmitting of
5 said PIN over said second communications channel.

1 22: The method as recited in claim 21, in which said package includes a magnetic
2 strip onto which said PIN is encoded, and said PIN-reading apparatus is a magnetic strip
3 reader.

1 23: The method as recited in claim 21, in which said PIN is optically readable, and
2 said PIN-reading apparatus is an optical scanner.

1 24: The method as recited in claim 21, in which said package includes an ICC
2 element into which said PIN is encoded, and said PIN-reading apparatus is an ICC interface
3 apparatus.

1 25: The method as recited in claim 21, in which said package includes computer data
2 storage media onto which said PIN is encoded, and said PIN-reading apparatus is computer
3 data storage media reader.

1 26: The method as recited in claim 10, in which said step of registering said product
2 further includes, after said transmitting of said PIN over said second communications
3 channel, the step of receiving an unlocking code for said product over said second
4 communications channel from said computer data storage apparatus.

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1 27: The method as recited in claim 10, in which said package includes a URL via
2 which said computer data storage apparatus may be contacted over said second
3 communications channel, and said method further comprises the steps of:
4 (a) providing a computer being interfaced to said second communications channel;
5 and
6 (b) providing a communications program on said computer;
7 and said step of registering said product further includes, prior to said transmitting of said
8 PIN over said second communications channel, the steps of:
9 (c) providing said URL to said communications program; and
10 (d) establishing a data connection to said computer data storage apparatus over said
11 second communications channel via said URL.

1 28: The method as recited in claim 27, in which said step of registering said product
2 further includes the step of transmitting auxiliary registration data over said second
3 communications channel to said computer data storage apparatus.

1 29: The method as recited in claim 10, in which said computer data storage apparatus
2 is interfaced to said second communications channel via audio recognition means, and said
3 step of registering said product further comprises, prior to said transmitting of said PIN over
4 said second communications channel, the steps of:

- 5 (a) providing a telephone; and
- 6 (b) establishing a telephonic connection between said telephone and said audio
7 recognition means over said second communications channel;
- 8 and said step of transmitting of said PIN over said second communications channel is via said
9 telephone to said audio recognition means.

1 30: The method as recited in claim 29, in which said telephone includes audio tone
2 generation means for generating audio tones and said audio recognition means is a telephonic
3 dialing tones recognizer, and said step of transmitting of said PIN over said second
4 communications channel includes the steps of:

- 5 (a) causing said audio tone generation means to generate a sequence of telephonic
6 dialing tones representing said PIN; and
- 7 (b) recognition of said sequence of telephonic dialing tones by said telephonic
8 dialing tones recognizer.

1 31: The method as recited in claim 29, in which audio recognition means is an IVR,
2 and said step of transmitting of said PIN over said second communications channel includes
3 the steps of:

- 4 (a) causing said PIN to be spoken into said telephone; and
- 5 (b) recognition of said spoken PIN by said IVR.

1 32: The method as recited in claim 1, in which said package further includes a
2 plurality of product registration cards, each said product registration card having a product
3 registration code thereon, and within said computer data storage apparatus each said product
4 registration code is associated with said PIN; said step of registering said product by
5 transmitting said PIN over said second communications channel further comprising the step
6 of having said computer data storage apparatus record that said PIN has been registered and
7 that each said product registration code may then be accepted; said method further
8 comprising the steps of, for each said product registration card:

- 9 (a) transmitting its said product registration code over a third communications
10 channel to said computer data storage apparatus; then,
11 (b) having said computer data storage apparatus verify that said its said product
12 registration code may be accepted; then
13 (c) accepting said product registration code by said computer data storage
14 apparatus.

1 33: A method of selling products at a point-of-sale with subsequent registration of
2 said products, said method comprising the steps of:

- 3 (a) providing a computer data storage apparatus remote from said point-of-sale;
4 (b) providing a package by which a product, being unactivated prior to sale, is sold
5 at said point-of-sale;
6 (c) providing a kiosk at said point-of-sale for vending said package, said kiosk
7 being in communication with said computer data storage apparatus over a first
8 communications channel, said kiosk including a PIN applicator for applying a
9 PIN to said package;
10 (d) transmitting said PIN over said first communications channel and between said
11 kiosk and said computer data storage apparatus;
12 (e) having said computer data storage apparatus record that said PIN has been
13 activated and may be used to register said product;
14 (f) applying said PIN to said package by said PIN applicator; then,
15 (g) vending said package at said point-of-sale by said kiosk; then,
16 (h) registering said product by transmitting said PIN over a second communications
17 channel to said computer data storage apparatus.

1 34: The method as recited in claim 33, in which said package includes a URL via
2 which said computer data storage apparatus may be contacted over said second
3 communications channel, and said method further comprises the steps of:

4 (a) providing a computer being interfaced to said second communications channel;
5 and

6 (b) providing a communications program on said computer;
7 and said step of registering said product further includes, prior to said transmitting of said
8 PIN over said second communications channel, the steps of:

9 (c) providing said URL to said communications program; and

10 (d) establishing a data connection to said computer data storage apparatus over said
11 second communications channel via said URL.

1 35: The method as recited in claim 34, in which said step of registering said product
2 further includes the step of transmitting auxiliary registration data over said second
3 communications channel to said computer data storage apparatus.

1 36: The method as recited in claim 33, in which said computer data storage apparatus
2 is interfaced to said second communications channel via audio recognition means, and said
3 step of registering said product further comprises, prior to said transmitting of said PIN over
4 said second communications channel, the steps of:

- 5 (a) providing a telephone; and
6 (b) establishing a telephonic connection between said telephone and said audio
7 recognition means over said second communications channel;
8 and said step of transmitting of said PIN over said second communications channel is via said
9 telephone to said audio recognition means.

1 37: The method as recited in claim 36, in which said telephone includes audio tone
2 generation means for generating audio tones and said audio recognition means is a telephonic
3 dialing tones recognizer, and said step of transmitting of said PIN over said second
4 communications channel includes the steps of:

- 5 (a) causing said audio tone generation means to generate a sequence of telephonic
6 dialing tones representing said PIN; and
7 (b) recognition of said sequence of telephonic dialing tones by said telephonic
8 dialing tones recognizer.

1 38: The method as recited in claim 36, in which audio recognition means is an IVR,
2 and said step of transmitting of said PIN over said second communications channel includes
3 the steps of:

- 4 (a) causing said PIN to be spoken into said telephone; and
5 (b) recognition of said spoken PIN by said IVR.

1 39: A method of selling products at a point-of-sale with subsequent registration of
2 said products, said method comprising the steps of:

- 3 (a) providing a computer data storage apparatus remote from said point-of-sale;
4 (b) providing a package by which a product, is sold at said point-of-sale;
5 (c) providing a kiosk at said point-of-sale for vending said package, said kiosk
6 including a PIN applicator for applying a PIN to said package, said kiosk and
7 said computer data storage apparatus both having a set of PINs that may be
8 vended by said kiosk;
9 (d) selecting a vended PIN from said set of PINs and applying said vended PIN to
10 said package by said PIN applicator; then,
11 (e) vending said package at said point-of-sale by said kiosk; then,
12 (f) registering said product by transmitting said vended PIN over a communications
13 channel to said computer data storage apparatus.

1 40: The method as recited in claim 39, in which said package includes a URL via
2 which said computer data storage apparatus may be contacted over said communications
3 channel, and said method further comprises the steps of:

- 4 (a) providing a computer being interfaced to said communications channel; and
5 (b) providing a communications program on said computer;
6 and said step of registering said product further includes, prior to said transmitting of said
7 vended PIN over said communications channel, the steps of:
8 (c) providing said URL to said communications program; and
9 (d) establishing a data connection to said computer data storage apparatus over said
10 communications channel via said URL.

1 41: The method as recited in claim 40, in which said step of registering said product
2 further includes the step of transmitting auxiliary registration data over said communications
3 channel to said computer data storage apparatus.

1 42: The method as recited in claim 39, in which said computer data storage apparatus
2 is interfaced to said communications channel via audio recognition means, and said step of
3 registering said product further comprises, prior to said transmitting of said vended PIN over
4 said communications channel, the steps of:

- 5 (a) providing a telephone; and
6 (b) establishing a telephonic connection between said telephone and said audio
7 recognition means over said communications channel;
8 and said step of transmitting of said vended PIN over said communications channel is via
9 said telephone to said audio recognition means.

1 43: The method as recited in claim 42, in which said telephone includes audio tone
2 generation means for generating audio tones and said audio recognition means is a telephonic
3 dialing tones recognizer, and said step of transmitting of said vended PIN over said
4 communications channel includes the steps of:

- 5 (a) causing said audio tone generation means to generate a sequence of telephonic
6 dialing tones representing said vended PIN; and
7 (b) recognition of said sequence of telephonic dialing tones by said telephonic
8 dialing tones recognizer.

1 44: The method as recited in claim 42, in which audio recognition means is an IVR,
2 and said step of transmitting of said PIN over said communications channel includes the
3 steps of:

- 4 (a) causing said PIN to be spoken into said telephone; and
5 (b) recognition of said spoken PIN by said IVR.

1 45: A label for applying to a package, said label having an activation code thereon
2 and said label comprising:

- 3 (a) a substrate having a PIN thereon;
4 (b) a removable opaque covering applied to said substrate over and obscuring said
5 PIN; and
6 (c) an adhesive backing on said substrate.

1 46: The label as recited in claim 45, in which said activation code is on a top surface
2 of said removable opaque covering.

1 47: The label as recited in claim 45, in which said removable opaque covering is a
2 scratch-off opaque covering.

1 48: The label as recited in claim 47, in which said activation code is on a top surface
2 of said removable opaque covering.

1 49: The label as recited in claim 45, in which said removable opaque covering is a
2 peel-off opaque covering.

1 50: The label as recited in claim 49, in which said activation code is on a top surface
2 of said removable opaque covering.